

in the last 20 years either as an engineer, project manager or supervising chief engineer.

Vern is a product of Los Angeles City Schools in San Pedro: Leland Street Elementary, Dana Junior High and San Pedro High School. Since graduating from UCLA in 1958, Vern has performed professional services for the California Division of Highways as a Highway Engineer, the United States Navy as an Engineering Officer, and, since 1970, the Port of Los Angeles.

Vern has dedicated much of his professional life to the Port of Los Angeles and the San Pedro community. I am proud to join his friends, family and colleagues in extending my sincere admiration and appreciation to Vernon E. Hall.

Congratulations Vern.

H.R. 2840 THE REGULATORY RIGHT-TO-KNOW ACT OF 1997

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 6, 1997

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing H.R. 2840, the Regulatory Right-to-Know Act of 1997. The Regulatory Right-to-Know Act of 1997 provides an important tool to understand the magnitude and impact of Federal regulatory programs on our economy. Recently, the President and Congress devoted a great deal of time and effort in preparing and debating the first balanced budget for the Federal Government in 28 years. This budget determines how much money the American people's Government will collect and where it will spend these funds. The budget for fiscal year 1997 is approximately \$1.6 trillion.

However, the Federal budget fails to take into account the full impact of Federal programs on our economy. The Federal Government also imposes tremendous costs on the private sector, State and local governments and, ultimately, the public through ever-increasing Federal regulations. Some recent estimates place the compliance costs from Federal regulatory programs at over \$680 billion annually and project substantial growth even without new legislation. These costs are often hidden in increased prices for goods and services, loss of international competitiveness in the global economy, lack of investment in private sector job growth, and pressure on the ability of State and local governments to fund essential services, such as crime prevention and education.

The benefits of Federal programs are no doubt substantial. Lack of accountability and regulatory reform, however, has left many Federal programs inefficient or marginally productive. Unlike the private sector, where freedom of contract and free market competition drive price and quality, Federal programs are only accountable through the political process. Moreover, historically, both Congress and the executive branch have driven growth in Federal regulatory programs, creating layer upon layer of bureaucracy at great cost and with diminishing returns for the American people. If Congress and the executive branch do not take concrete steps to reform these programs, the United States will surely decline in the world economy. Consequently, the quality of life for our children will also decline.

The Regulatory Right-to-Know Act of 1997 is an important management tool to evaluate the cumulative impacts of regulatory programs through an accounting of national expenditures and statements of corresponding benefits for each regulatory program. The cumulative impact of regulatory costs must be debated at the same level that taxing and spending are debated; after all, they are all derived from the same two sources—the private sector and the American people. Rule-by-rule evaluations are insufficient to capture cumulative impacts or manage national expenditures. Moreover, a national debate that focuses solely on the \$1.6 trillion Federal budget without accounting for the additional \$680 billion in annual regulatory costs is an incomplete and un-informed debate that leads to poor national policy and mismanagement of resources.

What is needed is an accounting tool that allows the Federal Government to fully understand the cumulative impact of Federal programs. The Regulatory Right-to-Know Act would provide such a tool. The bill requires the President to provide an accounting statement every 2 years respecting the costs of regulation to the private sector and State and local governments, and Federal Government costs by program or program element. The President would also provide quantitative or qualitative statements of corresponding benefits. Such an accounting offers the opportunity for comprehensive analyses of impacts on our economy through an associated report. The bill also provides for input from the public and opportunities to identify areas for regulatory reform.

Citizens for a Sound Economy and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce agree that the American taxpayers and business have the right-to-know the costs and benefits of Federal regulations, and, therefore, have endorsed the Regulatory Right-to-Know Act of 1997. I would like to submit letters of endorsement for the Regulatory Right-to-Know Act of 1997 from Citizens for a Sound Economy and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce into the RECORD.

The legislation changes no regulatory standard or program. It will, however, provide vital information to Congress and the executive branch so they may fulfill their obligation to ensure wise expenditure of limited national economic resources in all regulatory programs.

The letters follow:

NOVEMBER 4, 1997.

Hon. THOMAS J. BLILEY,
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, U.S. House
of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BLILEY: On behalf of Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE), a 250,000-member consumer advocacy and research organization, I would like to express my strong support for the "Regulatory Right-to-Know Act of 1997." This legislation would help establish a more effective approach toward regulation through increased public accountability and much-needed public dialogue concerning the costs and benefits of regulation. Americans currently face an estimated regulatory burden of \$680 billion annually. Increased accountability and a better understanding of the regulatory process would improve Federal regulations by providing Congress, the administration, and Federal agencies the necessary information to more carefully assess regulations.

CSE will work to ensure that regulatory process became law. The Regulatory Right-to-Know Act of 1997 is an important step toward a more reasonable regulatory process.

By providing the public and the government more consistent information about the costs and benefits of regulations, the Regulatory Right-to-Know Act will allow regulatory agencies to make more informed decisions while avoiding excessive or unnecessary burdens on consumers.

Sincerely,

MATT KIBBE,
Vice President
for Public Policy.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
November 3, 1997.

HON. TOM BLILEY,
Chairman, House Committee on Commerce, U.S.
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The U.S. Chamber of Commerce supports your proposed legislation to make permanent the regulatory accounting statement of the cumulative costs and benefits of federal regulatory programs.

A proliferation of federal regulations has occurred in recent years. Estimates now place the total cost of federal regulations on American taxpayers and the regulated community in excess of \$700 billion annually. These costs are particularly onerous for small businesses that simply do not have the resources to comply with the increasing number of demands imposed upon them. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, the proportionate cost of regulatory compliance for small business is almost three times that for large companies.

American taxpayers and businesses deserve to know the total costs and benefits of federal regulations. Adoption of your legislation would inject greater accountability into the regulatory process and facilitate better evaluation of regulatory programs. It would also help in allocating limited resources where the needs are the greatest. Requiring an annual regulatory accounting statement has strong bipartisan congressional support. It is time that it was made permanent.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce—the world's largest business federation with an underlying membership of more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, section and region—applauds your efforts and urges expeditious adoption of this common sense, good government proposal.

Sincerely,

R. Bruce Josten.

POLITICAL FREEDOM IN CHINA ACT OF 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. DAVE WELDON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 5, 1997

Mr. WELDON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2358, the Political Freedom in China Act of 1997. This legislation puts the U.S. Congress firmly on record as supporting the spread of democracy throughout the world.

This bill contains language authored by Representative LINDA SMITH which expresses the sense of Congress that the Chinese Government should be condemned for its practice of executing prisoners and selling their organs for transplants. As a cosponsor of Representative SMITH's House Concurrent Resolution 180, I am glad this language was included in this bill. Any Chinese official directly involved in these executions and operations should be barred from entering the United States. The